Two parallel rail lines over which the rolling stocks are moved, are usually called permanent way. Their proper maintenance is essential to ensure smooth flow of rolling stock movement and to avoid derailments. Durgapur Steel Plant maintains a network of 167 KM rail lines inside the works to cope its internal traffic operation. On an average, 750 wagons (in terms of 4-wheeler) are exchanged daily at the Exchange yard for the purpose of both way goods movement (Annex-19). 2

The annual action-plan usually followed there is detailed below to get an idea about the nature of work done under the section.

1. To ensure daily normal maintenance of the lines inside the works.
2. To plan for movement.
3. To ensure availability of spares, stores and tools, etc.
4. To ensure repair, renewal and overhauling the materials from the domestic workshop.
5. To census the nature of derailments to adopt corrective measures.
6. To ensure effective administrative reformation for the section.
7. To ensure steadiness to tackle the sporadic cases.

The following manpower is provided there to carry out the above mentioned schedules.

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1. Rolling stock includes both locomotive and wagons.
3. Ibid.
**Manpower.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Foreman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asstt. Foreman</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above noted manpower includes both stores and workshop people.

In Indian Railways, a departmental organisation of the government of India, a permanent Way Maintenance Section with the following manpower position maintains about 90 km track over which much more speedy trains are moved. The frequency of movements, in fact, is also much higher there. As such it is quite natural that a more critical job is usually carried out under the Railway unit.

**Manpower.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>1 Jr. Engineer for 3 units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor: Inspector</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asstt. Inspector</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff : Office</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistry</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalashi</td>
<td>181.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Labour</td>
<td>60.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>259.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the above manpower, the section has to carry out all the day-to-day maintenance jobs including that of laying new tracks as and when required.

The steel plant as a whole is stated to be already overemployed. Inspite of that, payment of overtime allowance, which is double the normal wage rate, on a regular basis, is not at all a happy sign. But, the state of affairs now prevailing there gives a very bad impression about the managerial efficiency. Scientific job-study must have to be made here to ascertain the nature and the work load likely to be taken up under the section. The Railways, specially in permanent way maintenance jobs, never pay any additional remuneration; inspite of the fact that their operations are also round the clock and incidents are also found happening there like DSP. In DSP, on an average 12 hrs. overtime allowance is understood to have been paid to the workers at a time irrespective of any additional job done or not. This is surely an instance of worst managerial performance. It inflates the departmental cost sheet, consequently affecting the annual financial result of the organisation as whole. Other co-workers are also inspired in a bad way out of this worst indulgence. They, in fact, attempt to run slow to create atmosphere of overtime working, when objected to, agitation starts rolling to get treatment at par with Permanent Way Maintenance staff. It is always an unfair phenomenon. Strict administrative measure must be taken to stop once for all this practice in anyway. Million of rupees are learnt to have been paid regularly under this head.

1. The remark was made by Sri Morarji Desai, the then Deputy Prime Minister at the opening ceremony of Skelp Mill in DSP sometime in 1966 when the present scholar happened to be present there and the report was published in leading daily.

2. Courtesy: Pay Section, PA Branch, DSP.
This sort of evil practice could be stopped provided the managerial practice were set in the right direction. People responsible for this sort of evil venture must be made to realise the harm, knowingly or unknowingly caused to a national organisation.

It is learnt from the Railway source concerned to the above nature of affairs, that on an average two cases of derailment usually occur in a month in an area and are regularly attended by the respective section. The regularity with which the routine line maintenance jobs are undertaken explains such a small figure of derailment cases in a month.

The performance of the Railways in India is quite often criticised but with the impression gathered out of survey conducted simultaneously at the Railways and DSP, there can be no hesitation to conclude that the Railways are doing far better than their DSP counter-part. Derailments are so frequent in DSP that quite often the usual performance of the sister units is seriously affected (Annex-12A).

Site inspection at DSP has also revealed other instances of poor line maintenance. The lines are, in many cases, found gone under ground; normal specification of permanent ways is not found regularly maintained there. These two instances are the root causes of most of the derailments. Again, in some cases, track areas are found filled with industrial spillages and jungles; but, provisions are already there to get them regularly cleaned. Still, very rarely these are done in usual course. The negligence is never actively questioned form any responsible corner; nor any system is there to the

1. Finance and Accounts Dept., DSP.
2. Parliamentary discussions on Railway Budget, 1975-76.
the routine affairs. Should such jobs be regularly done, a cleaning cell is to be formed exclusively to do the jobs of Permanent Way Maintenance Section.

Alike Railways, a workshop is also regularly maintained under DSP permanent Way Maintenance Section. A constant thrust and a distinct flow of operation is regularly continued in the Railway unit in consideration. Whereas, such a practice is notably absent in DSP; inspite of the fact that the line condition is already alarming there and it urgently needs all care in the greater interest of productivity of the plant at large.

In the Railways, a clear and job-oriented annual action-plan being detailed into monthly, weekly and daily schedules, is usually chalked out and strictly followed there in every phase of operation to ensure attainment of the targets. The deviations are instantly searched out and corrective measures are promptly taken up to warm up the huddles on the way of progress. No dilly dallying tendency is apparently noticed there; inspite of the fact that the rate of pay and other subsidies are poorer as compared with the steel man in general.1 The Railway men, unlike steel workers, are not paid any monthly incentive allowance or any sort of annual performance bonus; whereas the steel men enjoy both the benefits. Still their rate of average out-turn is very poor. There is surely something wrong in the field of managerial practice; otherwise such a prolonged practice may not continue so long. But, the entire responsibility must not be placed at the doors of the workers. What is found notably absent there in nothing but the managerial and co-ordinating abilities. Should the

management be a bit more careful of their own spheres of responsibilities, the picture might be changed altogether. Motivating the workers in action, in fact, is the right necessity on the part of managerial structure of the unit. Leadership is the quality on the part of line management to get on to targets. The above qualities, as found in practice, are notably absent in the concerned DSP management. These are, in fact, surely the main reasons of so low standard of performance on their parts. What is found possible to be quite satisfactorily carried out by one inspector in the Railways, is not found done by an army of executives in DSP. This simple fact clearly demonstrates the low standard of executive effectiveness in DSP. Efforts must immediately be made to get them properly in their own sphere of responsibilities.

While the Permanent Way Maintenance Section in the Railways with comparatively lower manpower capacity can carry out the scheduled responsibilities, it is not so in DSP. The shortcoming is sought to be covered by some fake arguments. It is said that the stores, materials and the tools, etc, are not regularly supplied to them; workers are unwilling to discharge their normal responsibilities and co-operation is not regularly extended by sister units, etc; and that the rail-lines in a steel plant are not maintained like the Railways.

The staff unwillingness may be a major factor there; but, it may be suitably tackled under dynamic leadership. Systematic motivation, timely co-ordination and proper control over all the affairs may over-night change the whole prevailing

3. The job ratio, as demonstrated earlier, is greater in Bly.
4. These remarks were made by the concerned executives who are unwilling to disclose their identities. The fact is that rail-lines in Bhilai and Rourkela Steel Plants are regularly maintained like the Railways.
picture. Similar instances are also found in other departments of the plant; but an encouraging phenomenon has been created, when the plant was facing acute shortage of furnace grade coke, a coke-oven battery was on the way of rebuilding and it was appeared to be a matter of time under the going process. The then set-up, as felt by a responsible quarter, was not pulling quite upto standard in that sector. A change was made in the managerial set-up of the area to get the job completed in time and under the renewed leadership, the underprogressed work found totally completed before the schedule. The plant ultimately came out of the troubles.

The stores, spares and tools, etc, are mostly indigenous and readily available. But, indents for further procurements of some of the materials are sometimes placed without looking into the inventory position. This leads to unnecessary piling of stocks which naturally has a serious impact on the working capital position of the concern. The plant is reported to be already running seriously short of working capital and the position has thus been aggravated to a considerable degree. This is surely a serious type of insincerity on the part of the operational management of the plant. The inventory control system of the organisation must have to be modernised and a regularly reporting system would have to be introduced so that the current positions be ascertained as and when required. All purchase proposals, before final disposal, must be tallied with the current position of the item to avoid unnecessary blockage of working capital in this way.

The annual action-plan, as noted earlier in this context, is found in the form of novelesitic way of expression without detailing any job-particulars, responsibility charts and the time schedules. The working gangs at sites must be supplied with a schedule of their daily and specific responsibility chart so that they may be aware of the jobs to be taken up by them in a specific time. There is absolutely no system to apprise the actual performance. Everything is found almost in a mess. The schedules are left uncared for, corrective measures are very rarely taken; supervising the operations sites is seldom done. Executives and the senior supervisors are found all the time placed themselves at the sectional office without caring about the process of working at the sites. Whatever is attained, in fact, entirely depends upon the whim of the gang at sites. The quality of managerial performance prolonged there for a long time, never reflects any creative approach. Should anything be really attained there, an objective management development scheme is a right necessity in this section.

To come out of this uncanny situation, a systematic scheme, as per the sketch given below, may be rigorously followed.

1. A thorough survey is to be conducted all through the lines inside the works to ascertain the actual condition there so that the future action plan may be taken up in that light.

2. Entire works schedules is to be divided into workable sub-divisions according to the condition and importance of lines.

2. This is almost a common practice followed all over the plant.
3. Frequency of train movement is to be studied to ascertain the probable free-time to cope with the maintenance schedules.

4. The schedules must be based upon the gravity of an area.

5. A schedule of supplies is to be chalked out being based upon the action-plan.

6. The schedules of action-plan must be drawn in details up to shift wise daily programme.

7. The schedules are also to be split into normal maintenance, periodical overhauling and total renovating jobs.

8. Responsibilities in specific terms must be fixed for the shifts, sites and individual as well.

9. Clear programme must be chalked out so that the working gangs can be chased as regular feature at the work place.

10. Specific arrangements are to be made to face the short-falls from the schedules.

11. Moveable flood light system is to be arranged so that jobs may be continued even during odd hours.

12. The administrative and office procedures must be job-oriented and head of the division alone should have control over the affairs.

13. Areawise long-book system is to be introduced to note the daily usual schedules along with the incerting of daily and specific attainments.

1. The jobs are usually carried out there during day-hours.
Regular supervision is to be made to go through the log-book so as to ascertain the actual position of all the schedules.

14. Arrangement is to be made to meet the sporadic instances.

The industrial relations are found in a stagnant position there. As the action-plan is not properly executed there, it is hardly possible to assess the real position in the division and it is quite usual that the situation will deteriorate as and when the normal performance will be chased from the workers; early attempts are to be made to normalise the relations in a realistic manner. Discipline must be restored so that situation does not go wrong in any way. Creative leadership and proper motivation are the right means to do away with all the hurdles. An executive in the rank of Assistant Personnel Officer is found placed in each department of the plant. At present, they rarely have to do anything for which they are actually placed there. From now onwards they should take an active role in the renewed action-plan so that relations do not appear to be a problem. Although traditionally acclaimed to have applied industrial relations are something possible to be maintained best by the line managers; but the departmental APOs will have real parts to play in some ways. They are to help operational management with their knowledge of standing orders, rules and regulations of the company, which may not be well practiced by the line managers. The jobs now being done by them, as appeared in practice, are nothing more than routine nature of work and may easily be done with the usual office.

procedures; however, the critical affairs may be subject to their supervision.

Now, with the revitalised action-plan and its thorough and timely execution, the performance of Permanent Way Section is reasonably expected to improve. Derailments will be reduced. The loss of output, now being suffered only out of derailments, will no more be there. The new figure, whatever may be its real dimension, will make for an encouraging financial state of affairs for the plant as a whole. There will be loss of fewer man-hour caused due to sudden haults of production by derailments.

The costing system, now being practiced there, appears very much complicated and hardly accounts for the above critical observations and naturally the real position never comes out. It is rarely possible to mention them all in details, nor there is any scope to deal with them in the present context. But, it may not be unworthy to note here that a realistic costing approach with detailed analysis for all aspects would automatically reveal to what extent the plant as a whole may gain out of a systematic way of running the Permanent Way Maintenance Section in a steel plant.